

## Community Connections General Application Form

General Application Form

**Applicant Organization Name:** Meals on Wheels and More

**Alias/DBA:**

**Program Name for Google Fiber Connection:**

Harnessing the Power of Google Fiber

**Organization Mission and Purpose:**

Meals on Wheels and More seeks to nourish and enrich the lives of the homebound and other people in need through programs that promote dignity and independent living.

**Organization Website:** <http://www.mealsonwheelsandmore.org/>

**Contact Name:** Nicole Sarkar

**City:** Austin

**State:** TX

**Zip:** 78702

**Phone:** 512.628.8193

**Email:** [nsarkar@mealsonwheelsandmore.org](mailto:nsarkar@mealsonwheelsandmore.org)

**Location(s) applying for site selection (including physical address of location) and how long your organization plans on being at each location:**

The Meals on Wheels and More facility at 3227 E. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Austin, TX 78702. The organization owns this facility. Meals on Wheels and More expanded this location recently so that it can prepare more meals, serve more clients and accommodate more staff. Meals on Wheels and More plans to be at this location for the foreseeable future, which is at least 15 years.

**Type of Organization:** ☒ Non-Profit ☐ Public Entity

**Number of years in operation:** 41

**Number of employees at location:** 113

## Community Connections Criteria Form

*(Please complete this portion of application for each location in an electronic document and please explain each response, 1000 words maximum per response, please)*

### Criteria Form

Please include location if applying for more than one location:

#### Organization

1. What is your agency's vision? *(response required for all agencies)*

Vision Statement from Strategic Plan:

Meals on Wheels and More's vision is to be the most effective nonprofit in Texas providing nutritious high quality meals and a variety of life-enriching services to older adults and others in need.

2. What is your agency's mission and purpose? *(response required for all agencies)*

Meals on Wheels and More seeks to nourish and enrich the lives of the homebound and other people in need through programs that promote dignity and independent living.

3. Please list your organization's affiliations, community partnerships, certifications, and/or accreditations. *(response required for all agencies)*

Meals on Wheels and More is a member of the Meals on Wheels Association of Texas and the Meals on Wheels Association of America. These umbrella organizations advocate for people in need and provide members fund-raising, networking, educational and other types of opportunities.

Austin Energy: They provide funds—e.g. \$27,000 in 2013—Meals on Wheels and More uses to assist its clients with their utility bills. Also, Meals on Wheels and More Assistant Vice President for Client Services Linda Perez serves on the Austin Energy Discount Steering Committee, the other members of which include Texas VFW Foundation, Caritas of Austin and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. The committee provides guidance and recommendations to Austin Energy regarding its Customer Assistance Program for low-income individuals.

Basic Needs Coalition/Best Single Source Project: Through its participation in this collaboration, the members of which also include Goodwill Industries of Central Texas, Family Eldercare and SafePlace, Meals on Wheels and More receives funding that it uses to help clients with their rent and utility bills.

The Austin Housing Repair Coalition, which Meals on Wheels and More chairs, addresses housing problems of older adults. Other members include One House at a Time, Austin Habitat for Humanity and Austin Area Urban League.

One Voice Central Texas (OVCT): Meals on Wheels and More is a member of this network of over 60 community-based health and human service organizations. The mission of OVCT is to convey the human service needs of the Austin area community to policy makers and the public and to support member organizations in meeting these needs.

Basic Transportation Needs Fund: Meals on Wheels and More President & CEO Dan Pruett is a member of this independent board. The Basic Transportation Needs Fund allocates funding to

nonprofits that utilize bus passes and that propose new projects/initiatives that provide innovative transportation assistance to low income individuals.

Air Conditioner Contractors of America, Austin Chapter: Meals on Wheels and More benefits from their annual "Heat the Country" program, a month long, nationwide community service effort by member contractors who voluntarily service or replace HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems in the homes of the elderly, disabled, or less fortunate. In November 2012, members of the Austin chapter assisted 25 Meals on Wheels and More clients.

AGE of Central Texas: In addition to referring clients to each other, Meals on Wheels and More uses equipment from their Durable Medical Equipment Lending Closet for its clients.

Communities In Schools (CIS) and the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA): Meals on Wheels and More provides nutritious meals to children who live in housing communities managed by HACA and who attend after-school programs operated by CIS at the different public housing sites.

Hospice Austin and AIDS Services of Austin: Meals on Wheels and More has a reciprocal referral arrangement with these two organizations.

Capital Area Food Bank: They provide shelf-stable food for H.O.P.E. (Healthy Options Program for the Elderly), through which Meals on Wheels and More volunteers deliver groceries to meals clients most in need of additional food.

Urban Roots: They provide locally grown fresh produce that Meals on Wheels and More uses in its meals or distributes directly to clients.

Rays of Hope-Austin/One House at a Time: Meals on Wheels and More works with them to make its clients' homes more energy efficient.

Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP): Meals on Wheels and More works with Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Service to identify which of its clients are eligible for CEAP. CEAP is a utility assistance program. CEAP is designed to assist low-income households in meeting their immediate energy needs and to encourage consumers to control energy costs for years to come through energy education.

Family Eldercare: In addition to cross-referrals, Meals on Wheels and More works with Family Eldercare on the summer fan drive. They provide fans and Meals on Wheels and More volunteers distribute them to clients.

The University of Texas at Austin: Meals on Wheels case managers and clients benefit from research projects of UT Austin professors and often participate in research studies.

Mobile Art Program: Representatives of this nonprofit provide art therapy for clients of the Meals on Wheels and More respite care program.

4. What is the total number of unduplicated clients served by your organization at this location last fiscal year? *(response required for non-profit agencies only)*

Last fiscal year (10/1/2011-9/30/2012), Meals on Wheels and More served 4,317 unduplicated City of Austin residents from this location.

5. Briefly provide an overview of your organization and the services it offers. *(response required for all agencies)*

Meals on Wheels and More is well known for providing nutritious, home-delivered meals to homebound older adults and people with disabilities, as it has done since its inception in 1972. The organization also provides nourishing meals and activities for senior center attendees and meals for children of families living in public housing. Meals on Wheels and More focuses on serving low-income people, and those served live in Austin and surrounding areas. This fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, Meals on Wheels and More will prepare an estimated 665,000 meals and serve nearly 5,000 people. The agency provides its services free of charge.

The thousands of volunteers who deliver the meals to homebound clients provide not only much needed sustenance, but also a smile and some kind words. The meal-delivery drivers inquire about their clients' welfare and help relieve any feelings of social isolation clients, especially the more than 50% who live alone, may be experiencing.

In addition to nourishing the homebound and providing them a daily human connection with their meal-delivery person, Meals on Wheels and More provides homebound clients an array of additional services designed to improve their quality of life and help them remain independent, which are two of the agency's main goals. The additional services, also referred to as "and More" programs, include:

Case management: The case manager assigned to each homebound client assesses the client's needs and helps ensure those needs are met. Case managers enroll clients in one or more of the "and More" programs as needed. If Meals on Wheels and More does not offer a needed service, the case manager will refer the client to an organization that does. Case managers also help clients apply for government benefits, deliver assistive devices such as canes or walkers to clients and get clients help with financial problems such as paying their rent or utility bills.

Handy Wheels and Home Repair programs: Meals on Wheels and More provides repairs, installations, renovations and maintenance ranging from something as basic as replacing light bulbs to repairing roofs or foundations.

Mike's Place: An activity center for clients with dementia, which also provides clients' caregivers some respite from the rigors of caring for their loved one. It is the only such center located in East Austin.

Groceries to Go: Volunteers grocery shop for or with homebound clients, who pay for the groceries.

P.A.L.S. (Pets Assisting the Lives of Seniors): Volunteers deliver pet food to clients and take pets to the vet as needed. This service may be particularly valuable for socially isolated clients whose only companion is a treasured pet.

Veterans Services: Meals on Wheels and More provides meals to clients who are veterans and provides them case management tailored to the specific needs of veterans.

6. Describe the community issues your organization is attempting to address. Include a description of the population most at risk of experiencing the issues described. *(response required for non-profit agencies only)*

As its name implies, Meals on Wheels and More addresses the problems of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition faced by its target populations, which include older adults, people with disabilities and children living in public housing. (Food insecurity refers to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's measure of lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and

limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods.)

The largest and most vulnerable target population the organization serves is homebound older adults and people with disabilities. Demographic statistics for this group of clients include that 68% are 65 or older, 87% are low-income (at or below 200% of the federal poverty income guidelines), 55% live alone and 67% are female. These individuals find it challenging to provide nutritious meals for themselves. They lack consistent assistance from family or friends who could help them with grocery shopping and cooking. The many low-income clients may not be able to afford paying for nutritious, home-delivered meals.

While the senior center attendees Meals on Wheels and More serves are more mobile than its homebound clients, a significant number of them live in food deserts, areas lacking major grocery stores that offer a broad selection of nutritious foods at reasonable prices. This makes it more difficult for the seniors, especially those who depend largely on public transportation, to access healthy food. Even those senior center attendees who can easily access major grocery stores may not be able to afford enough of the healthy food therein, however. More than 76% of those served are low-income.

In addition to the many older adults and people with disabilities who are at risk for malnutrition, there are thousands of children of food insecure families living in the Austin area. According to Map the Meal Gap (<http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-studies/map-the-meal-gap.aspx>), there were 58,900 food insecure children living in Travis County in 2011. The parents or guardians of these children may not have the resources needed to procure sufficient nutritious food, and they may not have the time or knowledge needed to prepare healthy, appetizing meals.

The problems caused by hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition can be severe for both children and adults. Children of families who struggle with food insecurity are more likely to require hospitalization, may be at greater risk of truancy and school tardiness and may be at higher risk for chronic health conditions, such as anemia and asthma (from <http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/impact-of-hunger/child-development.aspx#>). For older adults, malnutrition can result in diminished immune response, longer hospital stays, impairment in physical function, premature institutionalization, reduced activity levels, and higher risks of coronary heart disease (from Ziliak, J., Gundersen, C. and M. Haist. 2008. The Causes, Consequences, and Future of Senior Hunger in America. 31-32).

Besides facing the threat of hunger and malnutrition, the older and disabled clients Meals on Wheels and More serves may also be socially isolated, for reasons that include living alone, as more than 50% of the organization's adult clients do, and the loss of family and friends. The consequences of feeling socially isolated can include higher blood pressure, more susceptibility to flu and other infectious diseases, loss of impulse control (not being able to resist unhealthy foods or behaviors, for example), and earlier onset of dementia.

And if hunger and social isolation were not enough of a challenge, Meals on Wheels and More's homebound clients have trouble with basic activities of daily living, such as walking without assistance, personal grooming, getting out of bed or a chair and doing household chores. These individuals may need assistance with these types of activities to remain independent, which most adults prefer over a nursing home or assisted living.

Older and disabled individuals who are unable to maintain their independence and are not blessed with abundant resources may be forced to move into a publicly supported nursing home, which can cost the State of Texas and the federal government more than \$39,000 annually per person. In contrast, Meals on Wheels and More spends less than \$2,500 a year to feed people and help them remain independent.

The number of older and disabled adults in need of assistance will continue to grow as the population of older adults in Central Texas increases. According to population projections by the Texas State Data Center (<http://txsdc.utsa.edu/Data/TPEPP/Projections/Index.aspx>), the population of adults 65 and older in Travis County will grow from 85,456 in 2012 to nearly 315,000 in 2050. Since the elderly are significantly more likely to have or develop disabilities than the general population, the number of people with disabilities in need of assistance will grow in parallel with the increasing older population.

7. Describe the demographics (e.g. ethnicity, gender, age, and income levels) and geographic characteristics of the community members your organization serves. *(response required for non-profit agencies only)*

The table below shows key demographic statistics for Meals on Wheels and More clients who live in Austin. The data are for fiscal year 2011-2012 (October 1, 2011–September 30, 2012). Highlights from the table include: 68% were age 65 or older, 77% had an income at or below 200% of the federal poverty income guidelines, 49% lived alone, and 65% were female.

Demographic Category	Percentage of Clients in Category
<b>Age</b>	
0-18	8%
19-39	1%
40-54	7%
55-64	16%
65-74	24%
75-84	24%
85 & older	20%
Total	100%
<b>Income</b>	
At or below 100% of FPIG*	37%
100–200% of FPIG	40%
Over 200% of FPIG	14%
Unknown	9%
Total	100%
* FPIG stands for federal poverty income guidelines, which can be found on <a href="http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/13poverty.cfm">http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/13poverty.cfm</a>	
Those guidelines include \$11,490 and \$15,510 for households of one and two people, respectively.	
<b>Living Arrangement</b>	

Lives alone	49%
Lives with at least one other	49%
Unknown	2%
Total	100%
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	65%
Male	35%
Total	100%
<b>Race</b>	
Black/African-American	29%
Asian	1%
Caucasian	66%
Native American	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%
Other	2%
Unknown	2%
Total	100%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Latino/Hispanic	31%
Not Latino/Hispanic	66%
Unknown	3%
Total	100%

The following table shows the geographic distribution of the people Meals on Wheels and More serves. (These statistics are for City of Austin zip codes, but some of the clients included may live outside the exact city boundary, which can weave through apartment complexes, subdivisions, etc.)

Zip Code	Number of Clients in Zip Code
78702	692
78745	456
78704	427
78723	306
78721	262
78741	252
78753	250
78758	191

78744	189
78724	133
78748	106
78728	104
78752	102
78757	97
78727	75
78749	69
78756	68
78722	50
78750	49
78759	45
78701	44
78747	39
78754	38
78751	29
78725	28
78731	28
78703	23
78735	23
78746	19
78736	18
78739	15
78729	14
78737	13
78742	11
78705	9
78733	7
78738	5
78717	4
78719	4
78612	3
78726	3
78734	3
78765	3
78708	2
78761	2
78709	1
78711	1
78714	1
78732	1
78760	1
78766	1
78767	1



Total	4317
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8. Describe your organization's accessibility (e.g. accessible main entrance, within blocks of a public bus stop, etc.). *(response required for non-profit agencies only)*

While Meals on Wheels and More does serve a few clients who actually come to this location, primarily through the Mike's Place respite care program, the organization serves the vast majority of its clients either at their homes, at senior centers or at public housing communities. This location is wheelchair accessible, and is located 3 blocks from bus #4, stop #939 at 3223 7th & Allen.

Meals on Wheels and More serves seven senior centers located in the City of Austin, all of which are wheelchair accessible. The closest bus stop to each of those sites is listed below:

Alamo Recreation Center: 2 blocks from bus #21, stop #2020 at 2012 Chicon & 21<sup>st</sup> St.

Conley-Guerrero Senior Activity Center: 3 blocks from bus #300, stop #1346 at 850 Pleasant Valley & Webberville.

Metz Recreation Center: 3 blocks from bus #17, stop #1808 at E. 2nd/Pedernales.

Gus Garcia Recreation center: 1 block from bus #325, stop #1141 at 1200 Rundberg & Teasdale.

South Austin Durwood: 1 block from bus #10, stop #1664 at 2522 S. 1st/Herndon.

South Austin Senior Activity center: 1 block from bus #3, stop #765 at 3909 Manchaca & Prather.

St. Johns Community Center: 3 blocks from bus #300, stop #5505 at 1120 St. Johns & Grand Canyon.

Meals on Wheels and More also provides meals to children living in the following four public housing communities managed by the Housing Authority of the City of Austin: Booker T. Washington, Santa Rita Courts, Meadowbrook and Bouldin Oaks. Meals on Wheels and More delivers the meals to the community room at each site. All the community rooms are ADA accessible.

Since Meals on Wheels and More would primarily use the increased bandwidth to improve services provided to clients online via videoconferencing, internet access is as critical or even more critical than physical accessibility. As the organization begins providing online nutritional counseling to senior center attendees, it will install or upgrade the necessary hardware and applications at each senior center as needed. Similarly, for homebound clients who do not already have the internet access, equipment or applications needed for videoconferencing, Meals on Wheels and More will provide those items as it rolls out the new services.

9. If selected, how will your organization incorporate Google Fiber into the services it offers? *(response required for all agencies)*

Google fiber would quickly benefit Meals on Wheels and More by enabling organization staff to work faster and more efficiently and thus serve more clients. Google Fiber would enable more staff to telecommute as needed, and it would help case managers work more efficiently when out visiting clients. It would enable website and communications upgrades and increase the organization's ability to collaborate with other agencies. The high bandwidth connection would facilitate moving key organization databases to the cloud, so that, for example, case managers can more readily access and update the client database from the field. Meals on Wheels and More would benefit from increased staff

communication and increased communications with the general public through its website and social media presence, which aids fundraising.

In addition to increasing efficiency, Google Fiber would help Meals on Wheels and More continue to be a leader in the Austin area and nationally in using technology and developing new services for clients. With Google Fiber, the organization would move forward with investigating, testing and implementing new and enhanced programming, including case managers “visiting” clients online (tele-case management), tele-medicine, tele-nutrition counseling, and online volunteer training. Having the option to provide services over the internet rather than in person or by phone would enable Meals on Wheels and More to serve more clients, enroll them in its programs more quickly, provide clients additional assistance and save the organization money.

The high bandwidth connection would allow for future innovation and eliminate current barriers to and restrictions on moving forward with new and enhanced programming. For example, one gigabit would remove any restrictions on how many instances of various online services could be ongoing at any given time. In other words, all the organization’s case workers could be interacting with clients online, the Meals on Wheels and More nurse could be providing tele-medicine to clients and the organization’s volunteer trainer could be conducting an orientation online, all simultaneously.

10. The City of Austin requires an annual report explaining how selected organizations and the community they serve benefit from Google Fiber. If selected, how will your organization measure the impact Google Fiber has on those served by your organization? Describe evaluation methods, goals, and objectives.  
*(response required for all agencies)*

Key outputs, goals and milestones follow below. Each year, Meals on Wheels and More would report on actual outputs and progress towards reaching these goals and milestones.

Investigate using videoconferencing to provide tele-case management to clients.

Explore a disaster recovery partnership with another organization, such as the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas, as described in the innovation section below. In the event of a disaster that impacted Meals on Wheels and More operations, this would benefit those the organization serves by enabling the agency to keep operations going and get back to normal operations significantly faster than with the current disaster recovery plan.

Launch a tele-case management pilot program. Survey pilot program clients about the effectiveness of tele-case management.

Investigate providing clients additional online services such as tele-medicine and tele-nutritional counseling.

Investigate providing online volunteer training.

Investigate moving multiple program databases to the cloud for improved efficiency and access.

Initiate a pilot program for providing clients tele-medicine or tele-nutritional counseling. Survey pilot program clients about the effectiveness of the new service.

Roll out online volunteer training. Survey volunteers about the effectiveness of the online training.

Move one key database, such as the client or volunteer database, to the cloud.

Provide tele-case management to additional clients. Survey clients about the effectiveness of tele-case management.

Provide tele-medicine and tele-nutritional counseling to additional clients. Survey clients about the effectiveness of these services.

### **Community**

*(responses required for all agencies)*

1. Briefly describe how Google Fiber will enhance public participation in your organization's service.

Google Fiber opens up a broad range of opportunities for Meals on Wheels and More to enhance its public participation primarily through its website and the use of videoconferencing. For instance, fast networking speeds would allow the Registered and Licensed Dietitians at Meals on Wheels and More to provide nutritional counseling online to homebound clients and senior center attendees. The dietitians would be able to interact directly with clients and even take a look at the pantries of homebound clients to offer specific nutritional advice.

Another important way to increase public participation is through the organization's website and social media. Meals on Wheels and More has found that sharing videos, pictures and stories about clients and volunteers is the most powerful way to reach the community about its mission and those it serves. The speed of Google Fiber would allow for faster uploading of videos and pictures that would, in turn, allow the agency to utilize that medium more than it currently does. Meals on Wheels and More knows that the more it can share stories and videos, the more volunteers and financial supporters it is able to reach.

2. Briefly describe how your organization promotes digital inclusion.

At Meals on Wheels and More, it is important that all of its clients have access to the services and supports that most people enjoy. In Austin that includes technology. For the majority of Meals on Wheels and More clients who are homebound, having access to information in a digital format at home can be very useful. However, a common assumption is that the elderly do not want to or like to use technology. Meals on Wheels and More does not believe that is the case and as a result, has conducted surveys and pilot programs to show the need for digital inclusion among the elderly population.

In 2012, Meals on Wheels and More conducted a survey among its clients to identify internet and computer use. The survey found that of the 980 respondents, 40% had accessed the internet at least one time. It also found that of those who currently use the internet, 86% use it at least once per week and 54% use it every day. And almost all of these folks had an internet connection at home.

In addition to the survey, Meals on Wheels and More and its clients have been participants in pilot programs conducted by Dr. Namkee Choi, a Meals on Wheels and More board member and professor in the University of Texas School of Social Work. For example, in May 2013, Dr. Choi completed a pilot program to study possible barriers to utilizing online, evidence-based chronic disease self-management programs and identify the necessary training, resources and adaptations to facilitate participation. The program, called "Better Choices, Better Health (BCBH)", has been found effective in delaying deterioration by disease and disability and in reducing healthcare utilization costs. The pilot involved a small scale experiment with low-income homebound older adults who took part in the six week BCBH online educational program; one group with moderate computer literacy and a second group that lacked computer literacy. Dr. Choi found that giving the second group a few hours of computer/internet

training at the beginning of the BCBH workshop enabled them to complete it without further help. Results from the study included that compared with the pre-workshop scores, the post-workshop scores on most health and self-management outcome measures, including physical activities, pain, and health-related distress, were improved by 30%-50%.

Not only does Meals on Wheels and More advocate for digital inclusion among its homebound clients, but the organization also promotes it among participants at the senior centers where the agency manages the social recreation and provides activities. Some of the sites have received donated computers and many of the site managers offer classes on learning to use the keyboard and how to use the internet. These courses are very popular, which once again highlights both the interest and the ability of the elderly in the community to make use of the technology if it is available.

3. Will bringing Google Fiber to your organization help the underserved? Please explain.

When you are unable to leave your home, it is difficult to take care of your basic needs. Since homebound clients cannot easily come to Meals on Wheels and More for assistance, case managers go to them, either in person or by phone, to assess their eligibility and needs and provide assistance. Google Fiber would give case managers the option to “visit” with clients via videoconferencing (also referred to as tele-case management) when appropriate, which would eliminate some travel time and cost and enable case managers to serve more clients. The huge bandwidth of the Google Fiber connection would eliminate any restrictions on how many of the organization’s case managers could connect with clients online at any given time.

The videoconferencing option would also facilitate providing case management to clients located in outlying parts of the City of Austin. In addition, tele-visits would help Meals on Wheels and More determine client eligibility more quickly, so that frail and hungry seniors can begin receiving health-restoring meals as soon as possible.

Another example of harnessing the power of technology to enhance services provided to the underserved is the Problem Solving Therapy (PST) pilot project completed this year. Dr. Namkee Choi, a Meals on Wheels and More board member and professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Texas at Austin, oversaw the program, which helped homebound older adults, including Meals on Wheels and More clients, suffering from depression. Two therapists provided PST to project participants via videoconferencing, over the phone and in person. Project results included that 60% of the clients that received PST via videoconferencing experienced a reduction in their depressive symptoms and went into remission.

4. How much of your community will benefit from the Google Fiber connection?

Every year, Meals on Wheels and More touches the lives of some 5,000 individuals needing help. Those served are primarily 60 or older and the majority is homebound. Bringing Google Fiber to Meals on Wheels and More will allow almost all of these folks to benefit. It will allow them better access to the organization’s social workers and case managers and it will speed up the agency’s information and referral processes. The efficiencies realized through the Google Fiber connection will enable Meals on Wheels and More to help even more people each year.

Also, Meals on Wheels and More’s offices and central kitchen are located at 3227 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street in the heart of East Austin. This is a community that has historically been separated from Austin by Interstate 35 and underserved by mainstream businesses. It has often had to shout to have a voice in the community. If Meals on Wheels and More were to be selected as a Google Fiber site, it could signal to

the surrounding community that East Austin organizations are not being underserved and in fact, are able to take advantage of fast growing technology sooner rather than later. In a community that has often felt neglected, that is an important message.

5. Briefly describe how your organization will offer a new community service as a result of the Google Fiber connection.

Part of the long-term vision for Meals on Wheels and More is to offer medical access to its clients via videoconferencing. This “command central” would allow Meals on Wheels and More to keep in closer contact with the most fragile of its clients on a regular basis. By providing a nurse on staff, case managers could refer clients to the nurse to determine whether the client is in need of emergency services. A nurse could also provide maintenance checks on a client’s blood pressure or blood sugar levels, for instance, using remote medical equipment and fast internet service. This type of valuable information can be not only difficult to access but cost-prohibitive. With Google Fiber, Meals on Wheels and More would have the capability to offer these needed services, also referred to as tele-medicine, to clients without requiring them to leave their home – something that is already difficult, if not impossible, for them to do. Including this opportunity among the variety of services the organization offers ensures that a wider range of client needs can be met. It also allows Meals on Wheels and More to cast a wider net and provide similar services to those in hard to access areas in Central Texas, thus expanding the agency’s reach in the larger community.

### **Innovation**

*(responses required for all agencies)*

1. Please describe the potential innovative applications that could be developed with a gigabit connection.

Meals on Wheels and More provides home-delivered meals to more than 2,000 homebound clients each weekday. To handle the logistics of delivering all of those meals, the organization has established 250 meal delivery routes, with each route typically serving 8-10 clients. Volunteer meal-delivery drivers handle about 90% of those routes. The Meals on Wheels program operational model depends on volunteers—it would not be possible for the agency to hire enough paid drivers to cover all of those routes.

Meals on Wheels and More currently trains volunteers in person, mostly at its facility in East Austin but also at the locations of organizations providing volunteers. This works great for volunteers who live in East Austin and can break away from work for long enough to attend the orientation. It also works well for organizations to which the Meals on Wheels and More volunteer trainer travels. But for individual or group volunteers with hectic schedules or who live in distant parts of the Austin area, and who the volunteer trainer is not able to train by going to their location, it does not work as well. The enhancement of videoconferencing capabilities made possible by Google Fiber would enable Meals on Wheels and More to offer online volunteer training. This would help the agency recruit and train more volunteers.

In addition to enhancing volunteer training, Google Fiber would enable Meals on Wheels and More to improve its disaster recovery plan. Currently, the organization regularly backs up its data to tapes it stores in a fireproof, waterproof and shock resistant media safe located at Meals on Wheels and More. However, that backup process takes hours and there is no guarantee the safe in which the tapes are stored would survive a flood, a very hot fire or some type of explosion, to name a few extreme, though possible, disaster scenarios. Even if it did come through the event intact, it might be days before organization staff could gain access to the building, or what was left of it, and possibly days or weeks

more to replace damaged or destroyed tape drives, servers, and network infrastructure needed to reboot organization operations.

The organization also backs up certain key files to the cloud via Mozy, but the agency does not have the bandwidth to back up enough of its data to the cloud. The Google Fiber connection would allow it to do so quickly. Because of concerns about the survivability of its data and about where key employees would work during the first few days or weeks after a disaster, Meals on Wheels and More has talked to organizations such as the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas (CAFB) about a shared disaster recovery plan. The idea is that the two organizations would have a reciprocal data backup arrangement: Meals on Wheels and More would back up its data to CAFB servers and CAFB would back up its data to Meals on Wheels and More servers. If disaster strikes either organization, its key employees would help keep operations going by working at the other's facility for as long as needed. The Google Fiber connection would make this collaboration possible for Meals on Wheels and More.

2. Does your organization have or foresee high bandwidth applications?

Meals on Wheels and More utilizes various databases, first referred to in question 10 of the organization section above, to store client, volunteer, donor, employee and other information. This information is the lifeblood of the organization's operations. Currently, only the donor database operates in the cloud; the others are on Meals on Wheels and More servers. Google Fiber would give Meals on Wheels and More the capability to move more or all of its databases to the cloud, and even switch from software applications to cloud-based applications. The organization would like to go in this direction as client-server equipment ages and to reduce staff time spent on maintaining and updating an in-house, Microsoft Access-based database. Also, there is concern that Microsoft may discontinue some of the more advanced features in Access that enable the databases to work as they do. And finally, moving databases to the cloud would make it easier and faster for employees working remotely to access them.

Higher speed internet access would confer additional advantages, such as enabling more employees to work from home simultaneously. In addition, if Meals on Wheels and More expands from one main office to multiple office locations, Google Fiber would be great for connecting the different sites. It would also be more stable than the current DSL and cable modem internet connections.

3. Briefly describe how your organization is interested in advancing your technology.

The Meals on Wheels and More strategic plan includes:

"Be recognized as a leading nonprofit in Central Texas in utilizing technology to achieve outcomes; increase efficiencies, effectiveness, and exposure; and raise funds."

To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its case managers, Meals on Wheels and More will start providing them tablets in November. Case managers will then be able to type in information while meeting with clients or in between client visits. This will be significantly more efficient than taking paper notes and entering them when they return to the office.

Last year, Meals on Wheels and More finished rolling out a new computerized volunteer sign-in system that has dramatically improved the organization's volunteer management processes. Instead of signing in on paper, volunteers picking up meals at the agency's 14 meal distribution sites now use a touch screen computer to check in. This makes it much easier for Meals on Wheels and More client service staff to see whether volunteers have picked up their meals and give clients who call in an estimated delivery time. The new process also streamlines the process of determining which volunteers have not yet taken their mandatory volunteer training. And instead of having to email or mail in contact information changes,

volunteers can update their profile while checking in. Meals on Wheels and More was the first Meals on Wheels organization in the country to deploy such a system.

In 2010, the Austin Chamber of Commerce recognized Meals on Wheels and More for its innovation prowess with a Greater Austin Business Award in the nonprofit category for Innovation. That year, Meals on Wheels and More finished installing GPS technology for its meal delivery vehicles, which paid staff uses to transport the meals from the agency's central kitchen to the 13 satellite meal distribution sites where volunteers pick up the meals for delivery to clients.

One benefit of the GPS technology is that it enables Meals on Wheels and More to more efficiently distribute missed meals. Every day there are clients who, for various reasons, do not receive meals that should have been delivered to them. When that happens, staff drivers are asked to deliver meals to those clients. Prior to acquiring GPS, the staff drivers would often return to the central kitchen and then go back out to deliver missed meals. With GPS, however, staff can identify the drivers that are closest to the clients who have missed a meal and call drivers while they are still in the field to determine if they have available meals to make the delivery. Using this technology helps the organization save gas and driver time because GPS minimizes the need for drivers to return to Meals on Wheels and More's central kitchen location before delivering a missed meal.

4. Does your organization have the capacity and resources to advance your technologies? Please explain.

Meals on Wheels and More has the will, commitment, vision, staff and resources needed to consistently implement new technologies that improve its operations. The organization regularly updates its PC's and servers, and has a technology plan that includes converting physical servers to virtual servers.

The key technical staff members are Dick Rhyne, MIS Manager, and David Thompson, Database Administrator. Mr. Rhyne has BS and Ph.D. degrees in Chemistry from the College of William and Mary and the University of Texas, Austin. He has 27 years of IT experience. He currently is the IT person for both Meals on Wheels and More and the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas. At Meals on Wheels and More, Mr. Rhyne deploys, maintains, supports and performs upgrades of equipment, operating systems, and software. He also installs, configures, administers, and maintains the organization's networking infrastructure.

Mr. Rhyne's connectivity and local fiber experience includes negotiating contracts and subsequently implementing network and telecom connectivity for a number of organizations using T1, PRI, DSL and cable connections. He also implemented fiber connectivity between buildings and floors in several work capacities and has been responsible for enterprise router and switch configurations and operations.

David Thompson administers the client, volunteer, employee and other databases used at Meals on Wheels and More. He has a BA from the University of Georgia and a Microcomputer Specialist Diploma from Middle Georgia Technical Institute. Mr. Thompson has 15 years of experience in database administration and application development for industrial, financial services and nonprofit organizations.

Mr. Rhyne and Mr. Thompson often work together on projects, such as implementing the computerized volunteer sign-in system described above. Mr. Rhyne purchased and installed the hardware and established and configured the internet connections for the sign-in system. Mr. Thompson helped configure the laptops used at each meal distribution site.

In addition to employing capable technical personnel, Meals on Wheels and More has access to the financial resources need to make technological improvements a reality. For example, the organization has excellent relationships with various funders it can apply to for grants to support new projects. Those

fundes include the Walmart Foundation, which funded the computer check-in system described above, the Lola Wright Foundation, IBM, the Veritas Foundation, and others. The organization also receives unrestricted donations from individuals, foundations, businesses, churches and other types of organizations that can be used for any purpose related to fulfilling the organization's mission, including purchasing capital equipment.

**Practical Pragmatic**

*(responses required for all agencies)*

1. Will the connection help your organization financially? How?

Since it would be free, Google Fiber would save Meals on Wheels and More the \$310/month (\$3,720 annually) it is currently paying for internet access.

Google Fiber would also save Meals on Wheels and More money by enabling it to expand its use of videoconferencing to provide online services and training. For example, the Meals on Wheels and More volunteer trainer could conduct more orientations online rather than traveling to those organizations to do the training. This would reduce travel costs.

Case managers could also reduce their travel costs by conducting home visits remotely via videoconferencing. Additionally, this would enable Meals on Wheels and More to serve more clients without having to hire more case managers. Similarly, providing tele-medicine would enable the healthcare professional to serve clients without incurring any travel costs, and just one healthcare professional could assist a significant number of clients.

2. Will this be the organization's primary or secondary connection?

Primary

3. Does your organization have (or will it have) equipment necessary to connect?

Depending on the details of the connection requirements, Meals on Wheels and More may already have the necessary equipment. If not, the organization will gladly purchase whatever additional equipment is needed.

4. Does your organization currently have access to a high bandwidth connection?

The highest speed commercially available option at this time is a 50 Mbps download x 5 Mbps upload connection from Time Warner Cable.



**Applicant's Statement**

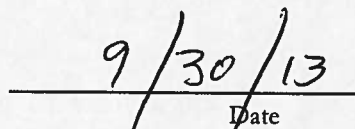
I certify that answers given herein are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that false or misleading information given in my application will result in disqualification. I understand and agree that I am required to abide by City of Austin ordinances, policies and rules.

I understand if selected to receive a Google Fiber connection that the organization I represent may be required to:

☒ submit an annual report to the TARA Office explaining how the organization has benefited from the free service.



Signature



Date

Dan Pruett/President & CEO

Title

**Please submit this form to TARA by 4:45 p.m. on Friday, September 30, 2013.**

Email: [digital.inclusion@austintexas.gov](mailto:digital.inclusion@austintexas.gov)

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